Introduction

Plan and Process

This is Mountain View's 1992 General Plan.

It builds on the efforts and visions of the past and states the aspirations for the future. Those efforts and visions have made Mountain View one of the most desirable midsized cities in the Bay Area. This General Plan, like those that came before it, identifies issues and trends that the community wishes to emphasize or change as Mountain View continues into the future.

The General Plan looks to the future, including projections for accommodating the growth of both housing and business, based on the most current available information. It is the City's framework for future decisions, especially for community development and preservation and environmental conservation until 2005. This framework is built on the Plan's Goals, Policies, and Actions, which provide a carefully balanced, internally consistent set of statements to guide the future policies of the community. Two basic premises of the General Plan are that growth can be directed to achieve beneficial ends, and the magnitude and location of growth is of direct concern to the residents, businesses, and taxpayers of the community.

The Plan document is a collective public memory about what the community is today and how the Plan's policies for the future were created.

The General Plan also entails a process, in both its development and its use over the next several years. It is expected to be changed as Mountain View continues to evolve. The Plan is general and flexible enough to allow for future change, but specific enough to inform residents and decision-makers of the City's policies on the future use of individual properties.

Most of the Actions in this General Plan continue programs that are already in effect, but new Actions are also proposed. Some of the new Actions will require a significant amount of public and private money to carry out. Cost was considered when this Plan's Actions were developed and should continue to be considered as decisions are made to put them into effect. Some Actions

included here are investments that need to be made to increase the potential for future revenue. At the time this General Plan was prepared, the City, like many governmental agencies, expects a slower rate of growth in revenues and more restricted spending than during the 1980s. This emphasizes the importance of assisting the decision-makers as they set priorities among programs by giving them a firm decision-making foundation through a well-thought-out General Plan.

Mountain View in the Region

Mountain View is located at the southern end of the San Francisco Peninsula, where the Peninsula joins the Santa Clara Valley (Figure 1.) This key location is the place

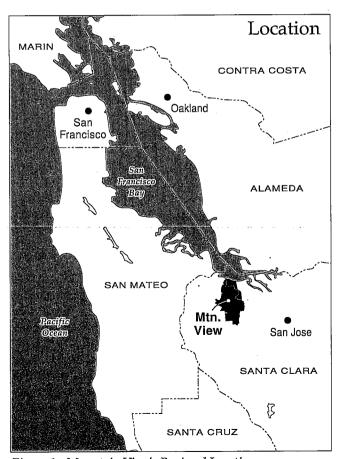


Figure 1. Mountain View's Regional Location.

where the electronics industries that extend across Silicon Valley meet the financial and corporate headquarters offices concentrated on the Peninsula. Mountain View's focal-point location is emphasized by the way key roadways and rail transit lines serving Santa Clara County join before continuing to San Francisco.

Mountain View's location makes it part of the Bay Area's economy, its housing and jobs market, the regional transportation system, and shared environmental concerns like air quality and water supply. This regional context is important because Mountain View affects and is affected by what happens in neighboring cities and throughout the Bay Area. Mountain View's place in the region emphasizes the need to both enhance our identity as a separate place from our neighbors while participating in the continuing evolution of the region.

Major Themes

Three basic themes are woven throughout the 1992 General Plan:

- celebration of the community as it is now;
- diversity of opportunities, past and present; and
- the evolution of the community, building on accomplishments while consciously preparing for the future.

Celebration. The 1992 General Plan starts with the premise that Mountain View is a great place to be. Mountain View is a full-service city that offers choices of housing types, business opportunities, and employment. The city can accommodate people of many lifestyles, ages, and achievements. The development permitted by past General Plans has created a community that people and businesses are proud to call home. Pride of place is witnessed by the new City Hall and Center for the Performing Arts, the revitalized Downtown, the investment in Shoreline, the large amount of public participation in community activities and events, and in the broad-based effort by residents and businesses to bring Light Rail to Mountain View.

Diversity. Mountain View's diversity provides a richer environment for its residents than many other cities. It is possible for people to be born here, begin their own households, raise a family, and retire, all without having to separate themselves from the community. This same richness and strength of diversity is present in Mountain View's business and industry. Mountain View has one of the most active downtowns in the county, as well as being home to "mom and pop" neighborhood stores and major, regional retailers. Industries range from Fortune 500 corporations to one-person shops that may be the next generation of high-technology industry.

Evolution. A city evolves as some buildings are changed to different uses or are replaced by new structures better suited to the needs of the time. Conditions also evolve as Mountain View's relation to the region changes. The City is working with regional agencies such as the Association of Bay Area Governments to address regional concerns and develop solutions that respect Mountain View's character. This General Plan contains many Policies and Actions to maintain and enhance the present environment as well as to guide the city's future development and preservation. Inherent in evolution is that not everything is known; problems and opportunities will arise that are not envisioned by this General Plan. But the Plan is a foundation of thought and policy that will help Mountain View deal with these new issues.

Specific Visions

Within these three major themes, the 1992 General Plan establishes several specific visions for the future. These concepts weave their way throughout the General Plan, but each of the four main Chapters—Community Development, Circulation, Residential Neighborhoods, and Environmental Management—has a separate focus and most completely presents Goals, Policies, and Actions related to its own topic. A recap of these visions follows.

Community Development Chapter

- Mountain View is a "third-generation city." It has grown through the agricultural and build-out stages and is now entering the renewal and redevelopment phase of its history.
- The mix of land uses in the city is well balanced, with a full range of opportunities for its residents and businesses.
- New development is important to respond to changing needs of the community. New development must be carefully located to fit the rest of the community so that the benefits of new vitality do not come at the expense of existing quality.
- It is important to achieve and maintain good urban design as an important aspect of Mountain View's character. Urban design is concerned with the appearance and function of each of the parts of the city. It also concerns the overall visual character of the city and how Mountain View can retain its distinct identity as Bay Area cities grow physically together. It will become more important as time goes on and there are fewer new development opportunities and fewer new buildings to enhance or change the existing visual character.
- Mountain View is a key part of the San Francisco Bay Area. It is the fourth largest city in Santa Clara County

and is the meeting point of the San Francisco Peninsula and the Santa Clara Valley. Mountain View will be affected by regional decisions, so the City should participate in those decisions to shape them to fit Mountain View.

Circulation Chapter

- The roadway system of the city is essentially complete; no new roads are likely to be built. Future improvements will be limited to modest road widenings, intersection and interchange improvements, and completing unimproved edges of existing streets.
- Light Rail Transit will be extended to Mountain View about midway through the projected lifespan of this General Plan. It will make travel easier for people who live or work here and can open opportunities for growth while maintaining the community's character.
- Greater emphasis should be given to using the transportation system more efficiently, both through improving relationships between land uses and transportation and by focusing on alternatives to people driving alone, including people walking or biking instead of driving, especially during heavy traffic periods.

Residential Neighborhoods Chapter

- Mountain View's housing stock generally satisfies the housing needs of the community. Additional units, at all prices, are needed to meet the demand created by Mountain View's supply of jobs.
- Additional housing can be accommodated by developing land that is now zoned for housing but is vacant, and by limited redevelopment of lands now used for other purposes.
- Innovation will continue to be needed to provide housing for groups of people that need special help—the elderly, the handicapped, the homeless, and young families now priced out of the housing market. Mountain View will continue to do its fair share to address this regional problem.

Environmental Management Chapter

- Mountain View has a good record of environmental management, both in preserving and restoring natural areas in an urbanized area and in protecting the community from environmental hazards.
- Open space initiatives focus on linking parks and recreational facilities with urban trails along Stevens Creek and the Hetch Hetchy right of way.
- Regional efforts to address problems such as storage of hazardous materials, linkage between transportation and land use, and air and water quality control will continue to be important and will need Mountain View's involvement.

 Mountain View will continue its high-quality public safety programs to reduce the risk to people and property from fire, floods, crime, and other hazards.

The following sections explain in more detail what the General Plan is, how it is organized, and how it is used and modified to keep it an active vision of the community.

WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

A general plan looks at the community and the region and at the issues and trends of today. It describes how the community wants to address those issues and trends now and in the future. The Plan includes the mandated elements of Government Code Section 65302 as they apply to the local conditions. (See table, page 9)

The Mountain View General Plan is a comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent statement of Mountain View's development and preservation policies. The Plan is comprehensive; it addresses all geographic areas of the city and interrelationships of social, financial, environmental, and physical elements to produce one community. The Plan is long range; it looks 10, 15, and 20 years into the future, allowing Mountain View to focus on the big picture and the broad trends that shape it fundamentally. The Plan is internally consistent; each Goal, Policy, and Action is integrated with each other within the same topic and checked against the Goals, Policies, and Actions of other topics.

Mountain View has managed its part of the economic growth of the Bay Area by making choices about what and how to develop, rather than just reacting to circumstances. The General Plan is the primary tool for managing that growth. It represents an agreement among the residents of Mountain View on basic community values, ideals, and aspirations to govern a shared environment.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Mountain View General Plan is organized into four chapters covering all the elements required by State law. Each chapter consists of text, diagrams, and other illustrations. The text explains the issues and discusses them, then states Goals, Policies, and Actions. The seven mandated elements are land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, noise, and safety. The organization into four broad subject areas makes it easy to recognize the interrelationships among issues, and among the Actions needed to address the problems facing the City. The table at the end of this Introduction shows where each

State general plan requirement is located within these four chapters. In addition to mandated topics, Mountain View has selected five optional subjects. They are urban design, economics, hazardous materials, air quality, and congestion management.

Legal Requirements

State law requires cities to prepare general plans. The general plan derives its authority as the summit of land use regulations from the California Government Code. The City Council adopts the General Plan by ordinance as a legal document. Mountain View's General Plan is more than a document prepared to satisfy a law; it is the major tool the community uses to consider and shape its future. Regulations, such as zoning, that are not consistent with the Plan must be amended to ensure compatibility. That amendment process will occur over time, as expeditiously as possible given limited resources.

The General Plan is to be used as a whole. One section is not to be used at the expense of others, but all of them should be used together, with flexibility. Used in this way, the General Plan becomes a powerful tool for ensuring consistency of City actions, while remaining responsive to the changing needs of the times. When optional subjects are added to a general plan, they have the same status as a mandated element, and no single chapter or subject supersedes any other.

State law permits the City to plan for areas outside its immediate jurisdiction if those areas relate directly to the City's planning needs. The Mountain View General Plan includes all the land in its sphere of influence. The sphere of influence is all the land within the city now, plus land that may someday become part of Mountain View through annexation. It includes NASA/Ames Research Center, half of Moffett Field, and two small unincorporated areas—the Navy housing at Moffett Boulevard and Middlefield Road and an agricultural property at Grant Road and Levin Avenue. These sphere of influence boundaries contain the maximum possible land area of the city, with all boundaries established by agreements with adjacent cities.

Maps and Diagrams

The City's Land Use Map, which is attached separately at the back of this document, is an integral part of the General Plan. The map graphically expresses the Plan's development policies by showing the desired arrangement and location of land uses. The map is required to be consistent with the General Plan text under California Government Code Section 65302. To be useful to City officials, staff, and the public, the Land Use Map must

allow anyone who uses the Plan to reach the same conclusion about the designated use of any property covered by the Plan.

Mountain View decided to prepare a site-specific Land Use Map. This map designates the type of land use permitted on each property covered by the Plan. The boundaries between land use districts clearly follow property lines or street lines. The Map and text together specify the number of people and dwelling units per net acre of land for each property planned for residences and the building intensity for all other proposed development. This building intensity is expressed in terms of a floor area ratio, which is the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net land area of the lot. Other pertinent features of the Land Use Map include the location of existing and proposed parks, public schools, and other public services, such as fire stations.

General plans also must contain a circulation element. This element shows the location and extent of existing and proposed thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, and correlates them with the land use element. Maps are needed to show location. Mountain View's General Plan circulation maps show current and proposed arterials, collector streets, local streets or other roadways, as well as bikeways and rail lines. This roadway system has been tested against the planned level of development proposed in this Plan and has been found to be adequate. There is more discussion of the relationship between land use and circulation in the Circulation Chapter.

Together, the Land Use Map and circulation maps graphically show the managed growth of the city for the next 15 years. The General Plan contains other maps and diagrams that show various features of Mountain View and help illustrate the Policies and Actions of the General Plan.

Plan Content

The Introduction includes:

- summaries of the major themes of the entire Plan and of each chapter;
- brief explanations of the nature and purpose of general plans and the legal requirements for general plans in California;
- a description of the process used in preparing the Mountain View General Plan;
- information about maintaining the General Plan over time through administration and amendment; and
- a table (Figure 2) that shows where each of the Statemandated elements may be found in this Plan.

The Community Development Chapter contains:

- descriptions of the current and planned land uses in Mountain View, allowable development densities and intensities, and interrelationships among uses;
- discussion of urban design—the visual aspects of Mountain View's development;
- descriptions of Mountain View's relationship to the region;
- consideration of the links between land use and transportation; and
- an evaluation of the economics of land use, including the concept of guiding comprehensive change in special areas of the city while preserving and protecting the character of the city by retaining certain areas free of change.

The Circulation Chapter evaluates:

- the facilities and methods for transporting goods and services;
- the interrelationship of land use and transportation;
- Level of Service standards for roadways;
- · ways of managing transportation demand;
- alternatives methods of transportation including rail, buses, bicycling, and walking;
- policies related to transportation and the environment;
- transportation of the mobility impaired; and
- transportation funding.

The Residential Neighborhoods Chapter contains:

- recognition that Mountain View is, in large part, the sum of its neighborhoods;
- a condensation of the State-mandated Housing Element adopted October 16, 1990;
- a discussion of the housing problems in the community, including the need for additional housing units, the high price of housing, the shortage of housing for special groups, and the need for housing those who have no homes;
- recognition that Mountain View residents are generally satisfied with their housing and neighborhoods;
- a discussion of how neighborhoods can be physically maintained and enhanced; and
- policies regarding how neighbors can group together to interact effectively, strengthen their own neighborhood identity, and deal with problems without outside intervention.

The Environmental Management Chapter contains four of the State-required elements; open space, conservation of resources, safety, and noise. This Chapter includes:

- a continued commitment to compatible blending of development with open spaces and recreational areas;
- a major new proposal for a system of urban trails;
- sections on cultural arts and conservation of historic areas, natural habitats, and open spaces;
- balancing development with water supply and quality;
- evaluation of air quality issues;
- policies for retaining historic and visual resources;
- programs for dealing with solid and hazardous waste;
- energy conservation policies;
- reinforcement of the importance of public safety, both ongoing and in response to disasters; and
- a discussion of programs to deal with noise.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

The heart of the General Plan is the set of integrated and internally consistent Goals, Policies, and Actions in each chapter. Goals are long range; they state finished conditions—the community's vision of what should be done and where. Policies and Actions are short to intermediate range. Policies state the City's clear commitment on how these Goals will be achieved. Actions carry out the Policies and are specific, such as defining land areas to be rezoned or bicycle lanes to be added. Together, Policies and Actions establish who will carry out the activities needed to meet the Goals as well as how and when the Goals will be met. Policies and Actions guide day-to-day decision-making so there is continuing progress toward the attainment of Goals. Some Policies and Actions may need to be re-examined and revised during the course of the Plan. While not changing the basic desirability of the Goals, Policies, and Actions in the long term, they will be carried out when suitable resources are available. The terms "Goals," "Policies," and "Actions" are defined below, in the numbering system and type-face used in the Plan.



A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.

Policy 1. A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions. A general direction that the City elects to follow, in order to meet its Goals.

Action 1.a An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted Policy to achieve a specific Goal.

In most cases, the General Plan text is arranged with explanations and information leading into the statements of Goals, Policies, and Actions. Some Policies and Actions require further explanation to make their intent clearer or to set down details to make sure that Actions are taken appropriately and in a timely manner. In such cases, explanatory language immediately follows the Policy or Action.

Technical Appendix

The Technical Appendix, a separate document, begins with a glossary. The glossary assists the reader in understanding planning terms, and helps avoid misinterpretations. The glossary will also be printed separately for easy reference. Terms critical to understanding the text are also defined in the body of the Plan.

The Technical Appendix also contains background material used in preparing the General Plan. Those who use the technical data in the General Plan text and in the Technical Appendix should keep in mind that projections are not inevitable outcomes. They are calculations of a future condition if the assumptions of today remain valid in the future. Changes in the trends or assumptions that led to the projections are one of the reasons why the General Plan should be reviewed annually and revised as needed. The Background Reports for the 1992 General Plan consist of:

Community Development Chapter

Report on Housing and Employment
Land Use Background Report
Economics and Land Use
Urban Design
Potential New Residential Areas

Circulation Chapter

Traffic, Roads, and Commuting Survey Results Existing Conditions Report

Future Conditions Report (report on four land use and transportation traffic modeling scenarios)

Residential Neighborhoods Chapter

Housing Survey Results
1990 Housing Element
Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact

Environmental Management Chapter

Environmental Management Questionnaire Results
Open Space Background Report
Conservation of Resources Background Report
Noise Background Report
Safety Background Report

General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The General Plan EIR is a particularly significant document. It is a complete assessment of the city's environmental conditions. The General Plan EIR is a program-level environmental assessment; that means that it examines the general nature of environmental impacts that could occur as the General Plan Goals, Policies, and Actions are put into effect. This program-level EIR helps determine the type and extent of the environmental concerns that will need to be examined in depth when the City is considering specific proposals.

Preparing one broad level of environmental review for the General Plan and then later preparing a more detailed and focused level of environmental study for specific projects or properties is called tiering. Subsequent tiers, or levels, of environmental analysis will refer to the discussion of environmental issues in the General Plan EIR to clarify which issues are significant for a particular area of the city or a particular type of use. The General Plan EIR tier also identifies those issues that may be significant and need to be studied in depth when more specific projects are being considered, allowing a more efficient study of the issues of greatest concern. As environmental assessments are done on specific projects, information will be added to the environmental record, updating and refining the City's environmental information base.

The Technical Appendix, while important to a thorough understanding of the General Plan process, is not adopted as Policy by the City, and it is not essential to the day-to-day use and implementation of the Plan. The EIR is certified by the City Council as an adequate assessment of environmental issues, but is not adopted as a policy document. For those reasons, the information is bound separately from the adopted Plan. Anyone wishing to review the Technical Appendix may do so at the Planning Department in City Hall or at the Mountain View Public Library.

THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

In 1988, the City decided to update its General Plan to give residents, public decision-makers, and private developers clearer and more effective policy guidance. The four-year planning process to prepare the Plan began in November 1988, and ended when the new plan was adopted October 29, 1992. Highlights of that process include:

- Key community issues were identified at a public workshop attended by about 100 residents and business representatives.
- Detailed background reports were prepared on land use, environmental resources, and circulation, analyzing these issues and proposing possible solutions. The analysis of housing issues is incorporated in the adopted Housing Element, which serves as a background report for the Residential Neighborhoods Chapter.
- 60 public-comment meetings were held by the Environmental Planning Commission. Notices of the meetings for each chapter were placed in the news media, and letters were sent to individuals or groups that had expressed interest in that chapter or topic.
- Five public hearings were held by the Environmental Planning Commission and one hearing was held by the City Council certifying the General Plan Environmental Impact Report and adopting the General Plan.

The result of this effort is a new General Plan built upon the ideas of Mountain View's residents.

This is Mountain View's fifth General Plan since the city was incorporated in 1902. Here are the highlights of those General Plans.

1946 - The first General Plan focused on the shift from an agricultural community to a small town with housing, commerce, and industry. The city's size was about three-quarters of a square mile.

1958 - The second Plan dealt with the booming industrial growth of Mountain View and the Santa Clara Valley, and the accompanying growth in housing for the employees of Valley industries. The city covered about eleven-and-a-half square miles.

1968 - The third Plan envisioned substantial new residential development in the North Bayshore. Largely because of that development, Mountain View was projected to have around 120,000 people and a balance of housing and employment.

1982 - The fourth Plan discussed the future of Mountain View as a mature city, where all vacant land is developed. It also acknowledged local environmental issues and reduced the projections of future population to about 90,000. It accepted that housing and employment would not be balanced locally, but needed to be addressed regionally.

The 1982 General Plan focussed on how critically important the development of the last remaining vacant parcels would be in setting the tone for the future and for improving land use balances. Key areas for development discussed in the 1982 Plan included the North Bayshore, Downtown, and El Camino Real. The Plan noted that most of the future development would occur on infill sites, and that redevelopment and renewal would become increasingly important. Infill sites are vacant sites surrounded by development. That Plan also addressed completing or improving many portions of the City's infrastructure—the roads, the sewer and water system, parks, and public buildings.

The 1982 General Plan established what Mountain View should be as it matures: a full-service city with a strong historical heart, good balance among all land uses, and well-designed public services and facilities.

The list of accomplishments of the 1982 General Plan is long. The background reports for the 1992 General Plan list these successes in detail, and each chapter of this General Plan begins with a few examples of the accomplishments related to that chapter. It is important to acknowledge the achievements of the past. This General Plan, like all the others before it, builds on the General Plans and the community development that preceded it. Each new plan is part of the city's growth. They change to meet the needs and desires of the present as the city looks to the future. The 1992 General Plan emphasizes this evolutionary process, and acknowledges that the community will need to continue to change to remain a vital, attractive place for both residents and businesses.

ADMINISTERING THE GENERAL PLAN

State law defines how cities should maintain their Plan as a contemporary policy guide. The California Government Code requires each planning department to report annually to the City Council on "the status of the plan and progress in its implementation" (§65400 [b]). That report must include the City's progress in meeting its "fair share of its regional housing needs." The report must be sent to the City Council, and to the California Department of Housing and Community Development no later than 30 days after the report has gone to the City Council.

In addition, the City should comprehensively review the Plan every five years to determine whether it is still in step with community values and conditions. The Housing Element has a set schedule for review; Northern California cities will next update their Housing Elements for adoption by July 1995. It is intended that the General

Plan status be reviewed in the Fall of each year by the Environmental Planning Commission and by the City Council. General Plan amendments will be encouraged in conjunction with this review, although amendments may be accepted at other times of the year.

Amending the Plan. While the General Plan is intended to supply long-range and flexible policy direction, it also needs to give clear, specific information about the use of property, public improvements, transportation linkages, and the environment, now and in the future. This requires the General Plan to be fairly specific; for example, the Land Use Map clearly defines allowable land uses for each parcel of land in Mountain View. As needs in the community change, the General Plan will have to be amended to reflect current City policy direction accurately and to continue to provide clear information to land owners, users, and decision-makers.

California permits up to four General Plan amendments per mandatory element per year (Government Code §65358[b]). Most amendments propose a change in the land use designation of a particular property. However, amendments to any part of the text, Goals, Policies, or Actions to respond to changing needs or accomplishments are also appropriate.

Amendments to the General Plan may be initiated by the Environmental Planning Commission, City staff, City Council, or the general public. Detailed information on the procedure and timing for amendments is available from the Department of Planning and Community Development. All amendments require application to the City and public hearings by the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council. Environmental review in

accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act also will be required for every General Plan amendment.

Any decision on a General Plan amendment should be supported by findings of fact. These findings are the rationale for making a decision either to approve or deny a project. While specific findings may be applied on a project-by-project basis, at least the following standard findings should be made for each General Plan amendment:

- 1. The proposed amendment is in the public interest.
- 2. The proposed amendment is consistent and compatible with the rest of the General Plan.
- The potential effects of the proposed amendment have been evaluated and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.
- The proposed amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code and the California Environmental Quality Act.

The 1992 Mountain View General Plan was recommended for approval by the Environmental Planning Commission on July 1, 1992, and was adopted by the City Council on October 29, 1992. The most current, official copy of the Land Use Map is on display at the Department of Planning and Community Development. A list of amendments and revised text reflecting those amendments and copies of the entire General Plan are available at the Planning Department and may also be reviewed at the Mountain View Library.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT
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Figure 2. Relation of General Plan Chapters to State-Mandated Elements.